

WINDOWS EXPLORER BASIC INSTRUCTION

WINDOWS EXPLORER is where you can see and manage all the folders, files, programs, music etc that are stored on your computer.

FOUR DIFFERENT WAYS TO OPEN WINDOWS EXPLORER:

1. Hold down the **Windows key** on your keyboard and tap the E key
2. **Double click** on any **folder**
3. Click the **START** button, click **Computer**
4. Click the **START** button, All programs, Accessories, Windows Explorer

THE WINDOWS FILING SYSTEM:

The three main objects in the Windows filing system are the Drives, Folders and Files.

- 1 **Drives:** These are physical storage devices eg hard drive, USB drive, CD drive etc. Windows allocates alphabetic drive letters to each. The letters A, B and C are reserved by Windows; A; is for nearly obsolete 3 ½" floppy disk drives; B: for obsolete 5 ¼" floppy disks and C: for the operating system files (ie Windows). Often C: will also hold all the users files and installed programs. Unless letters D-Z are configured by the user, the remaining drive letters are automatically allocated by Windows as each 'drive' is discovered by Windows. **Check your computer drives and what they have been allocated to.**
- 2 **Folders:** Folders are containers that store things. Folders hold files and 'sub' folders. Folders are given specific names, depending on what information they contain, eg, a folder named Flowers should only contain information about flowers. You will recognize a Folder because it is a yellow folder similar to the ones you purchase.
- 3 **Files:** Items which you create and save, and programs themselves, are called Files. Files are stored in Folders, eg, a Folder named Flowers may contain a document which you created in Word about flowers, or a spreadsheet page of figures created in Excel about the flowers in your garden, or a download from the Internet about flowers.
(The term 'files' can be confusing to new starters who have worked in Admin jobs. At work 'the Bob Jones file' often meant a collection of documents, certificates, records, maybe photos that all relate to 'Bob Jones. A file on a computer is different. It usually refers to one thing – eg a photo, a document, a certificate etc.)

THREE WAYS TO CREATE FOLDERS IN WINDOWS EXPLORER:

Firstly, decide which category you want your new folder to be located. Most documents are stored in My Documents (a subfolder underneath Documents which you can open by clicking on the tiny arrow in front of the word *Documents*), or you may wish to create a folder in Pictures, Music or Videos.

Method 1:

Click on the required category (eg, My Documents). Right mouse click in a vacant area of the contents panel, then click on *New*, and then on *Folder*. Name your folder (see instructions below on Naming Folders).

Method 2:

Click on the required category to open Windows Explorer at that location. Click on *New Folder* on the menu bar

Method 3:

Click on the required category. Click on *File, New, Folder* from the Toolbar commands. **Note: If the Toolbar commands are not visible, press the ALT key on the keyboard.**

Note: You can create a folder on the Desktop by using Method 1: above, (starting at right mouse click ...)

NAMING FOLDERS:

Before you name a folder, check to see if the name 'band' (where it has the words *New Folder*) is dark blue. This means that the name space is already highlighted and ready to accept a new name. Type in the name of your new folder. If you press ENTER or click this area with your mouse, then you will lose the dark blue colour, and you will have to select and delete the words *New Folder* before you type in the folder's name.

CREATING FILES:

Files can be created using different software programs, eg, you would use **Word** to create a document; **Excel** to create a document with figures; **Access** to create a database; **PowerPoint** to create a presentation etc.

In most programs, creating (saving) a file is the same method. Go to the '**File**' menu and select **Save as ... and give your file a name.** Before you press the Save button, check to see **WHERE** you are going to save your file. You will see a range of places where you can save your file such as: on the Desktop; in My Documents; in My Music; in My Pictures, on your removable USB OR directly into the appropriate folders you created.

Note: If you are unsure where to save your file to, save it on to the Desktop. You will find it very easy to move (or copy) your file from the Desktop into a folder (as instructed in our next step under Housekeeping). The important thing while you are a learner is to create your document, name it, and save it in a place where you can find it again easily.

HOUSEKEEPING:

Note: the term **HOUSEKEEPING** is used to describe the process of saving, copying, moving or deleting either files or folders, and generally tidying up Windows Explorer so you can easily find what you are looking for. Remember: They are **YOUR** files and folders it is **YOUR** job to keep them organized. If you decide it is all too hard then you are destined to get into a big mess with your 'stuff'.

We are going to learn how to copy a file that we might want to file in two places; how to move a file into a folder; and how to delete a file that we no longer require. **Note: The same methods will apply to the entire folder and its contents.**

COPY A FILE AND PLACE IT IN MORE THAN ONE FOLDER:

It doesn't matter if the file was saved on to the Desktop or if it was saved into a folder. When you copy, the original stays in the same place, and you paste a copy to another place. A file that is copied will then appear in two (or more) places. Normally this is a practice to avoid as it then gets confusing as to which is the latest file.

TWO WAYS TO COPY A FILE:

If the file is on the desktop, you will see it when you click on the word Desktop in Windows Explorer. If the file is inside a folder, you will need to double click on the folder name to open it. Either way, the file name must be visible (not hidden in a folder).

Method 1:

Point to the name of the file you wish to copy. Right mouse click on the filename and then click **Copy** (a copy of this file will be held on the clipboard. It will stay on the clipboard until you Paste it). Position your mouse on the place where you wish a copy of your file to go. Right mouse click and click **Paste**.

Method 2:

Point to the name of the file you wish to copy. Click on *Edit* on the Toolbar (press ALT if the toolbar is not visible). Select *Copy* and then follow the steps as given for method 1.

THREE WAYS TO MOVE A FILE:

Note: When you move a file, you move it from one place to another. It will only appear in one place.

Method 1: same as for copying a file, except select Move or Cut

Method 2: same as for copying a file, except select Move or Cut

Method 3: In addition to the above two methods, you can also move a file by using a third method call drag and drop. This is the preferred method by many people who have experience using the mouse.

Step 1: Hold down the left mouse button on the name of the file you wish to move

Step 2: Drag the file across to the name of the folder where you wish to move it to. Be careful here to observe that the name of the folder is highlighted as you hover over it with the file and that the tip of your mouse pointer is well inside the folder name area (Why? Often the mouse will move a small amount when you let go the left mouse button. This will result in the file going into an adjacent folder.)

Step 3: When you are certain the folder name is highlighted, release the left mouse button. The file will be moved into the folder. Check that you did it correctly. If the file is not there, check the folders nearby – you might have missed the target. To take the file out of an incorrect folder, use the same steps outlined in Steps 1 and 2 above.

COPYING AND MOVING FOLDERS:

You can use the same methods given for copying and moving files to copy and/or move Folders. As you become more confident using Method 3 above, you will find it very easy to do your housekeeping tasks in Windows Explorer.

MOVING MORE THAN ONE FILE AT A TIME:

You may have a large number of files or folders in **WINDOWS EXPLORER** that you want to move or copy into another folder. You can select more than one file or folder to move or copy at the same time.

Two things you need to know BEFORE you move or copy multiple files ...

- 1 If the files to be moved or copied **are all in consecutive order**, ie, one underneath each other, and you want to move ALL of them, then click on the first filename, then hold down the SHIFT key and click on the last filename. Every file in between will be highlighted and ready to go.
- 2 If the files to be moved or copied **are not in consecutive order**, you will have to select each file separately. You can do this by holding down the CTRL key and clicking on each filename that you want to copy or move. Each filename will stay highlighted until you are ready to copy or move them to another position. If you inadvertently click a wrong file, then, so long as the Ctrl key is still held down, click it again to deselect it.

DELETING UNWANTED FILES AND/OR FOLDERS:

Unwanted files and/or folders can be sent to the Recycle bin by clicking on the file name and pressing Delete or by clicking on the folder name and pressing Delete. Alternatively, right click on them and select Delete from the popup menu.

RESTORING ACCIDENTALLY DELETED FILES AND/OR FOLDERS:

Yes, it sometimes happens. You press the Delete key accidentally, and you 'lose' an entire folder which was full of wonderful information you really want to keep.

Go to your Desktop and click on the Recycle Bin (Trash Can) or other name.

If you can remember the name of the file or folder, type it in the search bar ... If not, check out the dates items were deleted. Or, if all else fails, read all the filenames and folder names until you find your lost treasure. Right mouse Click on the file or folder name, and click the word **Restore**. **Note: Restore** will return your lost document to the same place it was in before you lost it. So go back to **Windows Explorer** to see if you were successful in restoring your accidentally deleted file or folder.